

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 1 and 19.

Please add claims 37-50.

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for a pay for placement database search system, the method comprising:
 - storing one or more search listings associated with an advertiser, each search listing including a respective bid amount;
 - receiving from the advertiser a bid cap and a desired rank for selected search listings;
 - automatically-adjusting, without advertiser intervention, the respective bid amounts for the selected search listings according to the bid cap and the desired rank, the search listings being re-ordered in accordance with the received bid cap; and
 - if a tie condition makes a desired rank unavailable for a respective search listing, incrementing a bid amount for the respective search listing.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts comprises:
 - increasing the respective bids so long as each respective bid does not exceed the bid cap.
3. – 4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts comprises:

if the desired rank for a selected search listing can not be obtained because of the bid cap, increasing a bid amount for the selected search listing so the bid amount does not exceed the bid cap to position the selected search listing at a best attainable rank.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts further comprises:

reducing the bid amount to a minimum bid necessary to retain the best attainable rank for the selected search listing.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts comprises:

reducing the respective bid amounts only if the reduced bid amount exceeds a system minimum bid.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no bid change, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if processing an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no rank change, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:
if processing a requested rank to a higher requested rank produces a rank change to a rank below an initial rank, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts further comprises:
leaving the bid amount unadjusted only if the bid amount required for the initial rank does not exceed the bid cap.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:
if adjusting the respective bid amounts produces an adjusted rank that is below the requested rank because of a tie condition, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
providing an error indicating if the desired rank is not within a permitted range of desired ranks.
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
providing an error indicating if the desired rank is not a rank equal to one of rank 1, rank 2 and rank 3.
15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a single desired rank for all search listings of an advertiser; and
adjusting the respective bid amounts for all search listings according to the desired rank and the bid cap.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a desired rank for a displayed page of search listings of an advertiser;
and
adjusting the respective bid amounts for search listings on the displayed page
according to the desired rank and the bid cap.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
providing a confirmation of the received bid cap.
18. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
providing a notification after adjusting the respective bid amounts.
19. (Currently Amended) A database search system comprising:
a database configured to store search listings associated with one or more
advertisers, each search listing including a respective bid amount;
first program code to produce an advertiser access page; and
second program code to update one or more listings of the database in response
to a desired rank and bid cap received from an advertiser using the
advertiser access page;
wherein the search listings are ~~automatically re-ordered~~ without advertiser
intervention in accordance with the received desired rank and bid cap, the
second program code further to determine if a tie condition makes a
desired rank unavailable for a respective search listing, and if so, to
increment a bid amount for the respective search listing.
20. (Original) The database search system of claim 19 wherein the first
program code is configured to display a page of search listings associated with an
advertiser including a first text box and a second text box for each displayed search
listing, the first text box to receive data corresponding to the desired rank for a search

listing and the second text box to receive data corresponding to the bid cap for the search listing.

21. (Previously Presented) The database search system of claim 19 wherein the first program code is further configured to display a first page fill text box and a second page fill text box, the first page fill text box to receive data corresponding to the desired rank for all search listings displayed on the page and the second page fill text box to receive data corresponding to the bid cap for all search listings displayed on the page.

22. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if a selected search listing is a grandfathered search listing and if adjusting the respective bid amount for the grandfathered search listing produces an adjusted rank that exceeds the desired rank, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the search listings that have a keyword matching a keyword entered by a searcher are ordered using the respective bid amounts for the respective search listings and listed on a result list including at least some of the ordered listings.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for a pay for placement database search system, the method comprising:

storing one or more search listings associated with an advertiser, each search listing including a respective bid amount;

receiving, from a web browser of the advertiser, a bid update for selected search listings comprising a bid cap and a desired rank;

submitting the bid update to a bid service queue in the database search system;
and

in the bid service queue:

adjusting the respective bid amounts for the selected search listings according to the bid update, wherein adjusting comprises, if the desired rank for a selected search listing can not be obtained because of the bid cap, increasing a bid amount for the selected search listing so the bid amount does not exceed the bid cap to position the selected search listing at a best attainable rank; and

if a subsequent bid update is received from the advertiser with additional updates to any search listing for which a change has been requested but which is still in the bid service queue, overwriting the bid update for that search listing with the subsequent bid update for that search listing.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts comprises:

increasing the respective bids so long as each respective bid does not exceed the bid cap.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 further comprising:

if a tie condition makes a desired rank unavailable for a respective search listing, incrementing a bid amount for the respective search listing.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts further comprises:

reducing the bid amount to a minimum bid necessary to retain the best attainable rank for the selected search listing.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting the respective bid amounts comprises:

reducing the respective bid amounts only if the reduced bid amount exceeds a system minimum bid.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no bid change, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if processing an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no rank change, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if processing a requested rank to a higher requested rank produces a rank change to a rank below an initial rank, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts further comprises:

leaving the bid amount unadjusted only if the bid amount required for the initial rank does not exceed the bid cap.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if adjusting the respective bid amounts produces an adjusted rank that is below the requested rank because of a tie condition, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

if a selected search listing is a grandfathered search listing and if adjusting the respective bid amount for the grandfathered search listing produces an

adjusted rank that exceeds the desired rank, leaving the bid amount unadjusted.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
providing an error indicating if the desired rank is not within a permitted range of desired ranks.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 further comprising:
providing an error indicating if the desired rank is not a rank equal to one of rank 1, rank 2 and rank 3.

37. (New) A method for managing bids in a pay for placement database search system, the method comprising:
storing one or more search listings associated with an advertiser, each search listing including a respective bid amount, search listings which have a keyword matching a keyword entered by a searcher being ordered using the respective bid amounts for the respective search listings and listed on a result list including at least some of the ordered listings;
receiving a bid cap and a desired rank for selected search listings, the selected search listings being designated premium search listings, the desired rank being limited to one of a predetermined number of positions near the top of the search result list;
adjusting the respective bid amounts for the selected search listings according to the bid cap and the desired rank, the search listings being re-ordered in accordance with the received bid cap;
receiving from an affiliated web service provider a search query matching a selected search listing, the search query entered by a searcher accessing a web site of the affiliated web service provider; and
in response to the received search query, providing to the affiliated web service provider for forwarding to the searcher a search result list including the

selected search listing positioned as re-ordered in accordance with the received bid cap and the desired rank.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 further comprising:
incrementing a bid amount for a respective search listing if a tie condition makes a desired rank unavailable for the respective search listing.
39. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:
leaving the bid amount unadjusted if an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no bid change.
40. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:
leaving the bid amount unadjusted if processing an adjusted bid amount for a selected search listing produces no rank change.
41. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:
leaving the bid amount unadjusted if processing a desired rank to a higher desired rank produces a rank change to a rank below an initial rank.
42. (New) The method of claim 41 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts further comprises:
leaving the bid amount unadjusted only if the bid amount required for the initial rank does not exceed the bid cap.

43. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein adjusting respective bid amounts comprises:

leaving the bid amount unadjusted if adjusting the respective bid amounts produces an adjusted rank that is below the desired rank because of a tie condition.

44. (New) A database search system comprising:

a database configured to store search listings associated with one or more advertisers, each search listing including a respective bid amount and a keyword, search listings which have a keyword which matches a keyword entered by a searcher being ordered using the respective bid amounts for the respective search listings and listed on a result list including at least some of the ordered listings;

a computer readable medium having stored thereon first program code to produce an advertiser access page;

a computer readable medium having stored thereon second program code to update one or more selected listings of the database in response to a desired rank and bid cap received from an advertiser using the advertiser access page, the selected search listings being re-ordered in accordance with the received desired rank and bid cap, the second program code further to determine if a tie condition makes a desired rank unavailable for a respective selected search listing, and if so, to increment a bid amount for the respective selected search listing; and

a computer readable medium having stored thereon third program code to receive a message containing a search query entered by a searcher accessing a web site operated by an affiliated web service provider, the message forwarded to the database search system from the affiliated web service provider, the third program code to further provide a response message to the affiliated web service provider for forwarding to the searcher if the search query matches one of the selected search listings,

the response message including a search result list including the one selected search listing positioned as re-ordered in accordance with the received bid cap and the desired rank.

45. (New) A database search system comprising:
- a search engine database storing one or more search listings associated with advertisers, each search listing including at least one keyword and a respective bid amount, some of the search listings being designated premium search listings;
 - an account management storage medium storing an account management database;
 - a search engine web server which, in response to keyword queries from users, generates a search result list that includes search listing entries matching the keyword obtained from the bidding process conducted by the account management server, the search listing entries being ordered in the search result list with a rank order, the rank of each search listing entry being determined using the respective bid amounts for the search listings; and
 - an account management server accessible over a network by advertisers using client computers, the account management server configured to provide advertisers access to advertiser account information to manage the advertiser account information and, upon receipt of a new bid amount and desired rank for a search listing designated as a premium search listing, to automatically adjust the respective bid amount of the specified search listing until the rank of the specified search listing in the rank order of search listings is greater than the desired rank or until the respective bid amount of the specified search listing is less than the new bid amount;
- the search engine web server configured to receive from web sites of affiliated web service providers forwarded a search query entered by an affiliate web site searcher who accesses web pages of the affiliated web service

providers and to produce search results in response to the forwarded search queries, the produced search results including one or more premium search listings for display to the affiliate web site searcher ranked near the top of the produced search results in accordance with the desired rank.

46. (New) The database search system of claim 45 further comprising: an advertiser web server and an advertiser database storing advertiser web pages associated with respective advertisers.

47. (New) The database search system of claim 45 wherein, upon receipt of a new bid amount and desired rank, the specified search listing is removed from the search engine database to the account management database.

48. (New) The database search system of claim 47 wherein the account management server is further configured to identify exceptions conditions after adjusting the respective bid amount of the specified search listing and, if an exception condition is identified, to return the specified search listing to the search engine database unchanged.

49. (New) The database search system of claim 45 wherein the desired rank is limited to one of the ranks corresponding to premium listings.

50. (New) The database search system of claim 49 wherein the premium listings comprise rank 1, rank 2 and rank 3 corresponding to the first three search listings displayed to a user in the search result list.